

summary of criteria and calculations for absolute ratings and improvement ratings (high schools – grades 9-12)

These talking points present general information on the calculation of Absolute and Improvement Ratings for schools enrolling students in grades 9 through 12. To obtain more technical and specific information on school and district ratings, refer to the Annual Accountability Manual available on the SC Education Oversight Committee Web site at www.sceoc.org.

- South Carolina's education accountability system centers around one fundamental belief: **ALL children can achieve.**
- The system uses academic achievement standards to push schools and students toward higher performance and focuses on improving teaching and learning so students are equipped with a strong academic foundation.
- Every student is held to the same high standards, and every school and district is accountable for each of its students.
- The system is designed to evaluate annually the progress of each school and school district.
- The 2010 goal states, "South Carolina's student achievement will be ranked in the top half of states nationally. To achieve this goal, we must become one of the five fastest improving systems in the country." The goal is used to establish expectations.
- Continuous improvement is the key to meeting South Carolina's 2010 achievement goal. The ratings system is constructed to increase in rigor over time. The target for individual student performance established by the State Board of Education is a score of Proficient. A score

of Proficient means the student has met expectations and is well-prepared for work at the next grade level.

Basic Information

- A typical high school is defined as enrolling students in grades 9 through 12.
- Any school that includes a grade on either side of the typical pattern will be viewed as part of that organizational pattern. For example, if a school includes grades 5-9, it would be considered a middle school. If a school includes grades 8 through 12, it would be considered a high school. If a school includes two or more grades on either side of the typical pattern (e.g., 7-12), two report cards are issued.
- Each high school receives two performance ratings and notification of AYP:

Absolute Rating – based on the level of performance on measures of high school student success during the school year on which the report card is based. Measures are longitudinal performance on high school exit exam, the percentage of seniors qualifying for LIFE scholarships to a four-year institution (meeting both grade point average and SAT/ACT score as set by the State), high school exit exam passage rate (first attempt), and the 4-year graduation rate.

Improvement Rating – based on the progress of cohorts of students toward attaining and/or maintaining higher levels of performance on measures of student success from year to year. Measures are the same as in the Absolute Rating, with improvement measured by calculating the gain in performance from the prior school year.

What criteria are used to calculate ratings for high schools?

Through 2005-2006, the ratings criteria for high schools include longitudinal student performance on the high school exit exam, percentage of tenth graders (first attempt) passing the high school exit exam, percentage of seniors meeting GPA and SAT/ACT eligibility criteria for LIFE scholarships, and 4-year high school graduation rate.

- Percentage of students who pass the high school exit exam (HSAP) within two years after taking it for the first time (longitudinal exit exam performance).
- Percentage of students taking the HSAP for the first time who achieve scores of "2" or higher on all parts of the exit exam.
- Percentage of seniors meeting specified criteria for LIFE Scholarships to four-year colleges/universities (meeting both grade point average and SAT/ACT score as set by the State).
- Percentage of all students enrolled in grade 9 for the first time four years prior to the year of the report card who earn a standard high school diploma (not GED) – Four-year graduation rate*

* Note regarding Four-year Graduation Rate Criterion: Graduation rates published on the South Carolina school and district report cards may be higher than the actual rates because of incomplete data on students who are no longer enrolled in the school or district.

Beginning in 2006-2007, End-of-Course test results will replace LIFE scholarship eligibility in the calculation of the ratings.

Which students are included in the high school ratings?

- Students enrolled in the school by the 45th day and at the time of testing.
- Students enrolled in the senior class (LIFE Scholarships) or their fourth high school year (4-year graduation rate.)
- Students with disabilities are included as follows:
 - Students with accommodated administrations will be treated identically to students taking the HSAP in its standard form in school and district ratings.
 - Students taking modified assessments will be factored into the Absolute Rating according to the test score earned.
 - Students taking alternate assessments will be included in the ratings calculation only at the district level.
- English Language Learners (students with limited English proficiency) are tested in accordance with federal guidelines. Students excused from testing by federal rules are excluded from the number of students eligible for testing.

How are Absolute Ratings calculated for high schools?

- Ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index.
- The index is calculated using the following formula:

Criterion (% is the weighting factor)	Points Assigned				
	5	4	3	2	1
Longitudinal Exit Exam Passage Rate (30%)	100 % (5 x .3 = 1.5 pts)	97.5-99.9 % (4 x .3 = 1.2 pts)	90.7-97.4 % (3 x .3 = 0.9 pts)	87.3-90.6 % (2 x .3 = 0.6 pts)	Below 87.3 % (1 x .3 = 0.3 pts)
First Attempt HSAP Passage Rate (20%)	62.9 % or more (5 x .2 = 1.0 pts)	53.7-62.8 % (4 x .2 = 0.8 pts)	37.4-53.6 % (3 x .2 = 0.6 pts)	26.7-37.3 % (2 x .2 = 0.4 pts)	Below 26.7% (1 x .2 = 0.2 pts)
Eligibility for LIFE Scholarships (20%)	38.6 % or more (5 x .2 = 1.0 pts)	28.7-38.5 % (4 x .2 = 0.8 pts)	8.9-28.6 % (3 x .2 = 0.6 pts)	4.0-8.8 % (2 x .2 = 0.4 pts)	Below 4.0 % (1 x .2 = 0.2 pts)
Graduation Rate (30%)	88.3 % or more (5 x .3 = 1.5 pts)	79.6-88.2 % (4 x .3 = 1.2 pts)	62.2-79.5 % (3 x .3 = 0.9 pts)	53.5-62.1 % (2 x .3 = 0.6 pts)	Below 53.5 % (1 x .3 = 0.3 pts)

Step 1 – Match the school's data/performance to the points assigned to each rating criterion in the table above.

Step 2 – Add the weighted points for each criterion. Weighted points are those in parentheses in the table above. Weighted points are calculated by multiplying the assigned points by the weighting factor assigned to each criterion.

The resulting index determines the school's Absolute Rating as follows:

Range of Indices Corresponding to Absolute Rating					
Year	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Unsatisfactory
2004	3.5 and above*	3.1-3.4*	2.7-3.0	2.3-2.6	Below 2.3
2005	3.6 and above*	3.2-3.5*	2.8-3.1	2.4-2.7	Below 2.4
2006	3.7 and above*	3.3 – 3.6*	2.9 – 3.2	2.5 – 2.8	Below 2.5
2007	3.8 and above*	3.4 – 3.7*	3.0 – 3.3	2.6 – 2.9	Below 2.6
2008	3.9 and above*	3.5 – 3.8*	3.1 – 3.4	2.7 – 3.0	Below 2.7
2009	4.0 and above*	3.6 – 3.9*	3.2 – 3.5	2.8 – 3.1	Below 2.8
2010	4.1 and above*	3.7 – 4.0*	3.3 – 3.6	2.9 – 3.2	Below 2.9

School must meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) objectives for the category, "all students," in each subject area and for percent tested.

Step 3 – For schools with an Excellent or Good Absolute Rating, determine if Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the category, “all students” has been met.

The resulting index (step 2) determines the school’s Absolute Rating; however, schools with an Excellent or Good Absolute Rating will decrease one rating category if they have not met AYP for all students. For example, if a school had an index of 3.7 in 2006 but did not make AYP for all students, its rating would be lowered from Excellent to Good. Or if a school in 2006 had an index of 3.3 but did not make AYP for the category, “all students”, its rating would be lowered from Good to Average.

Here is a sample calculation of an Absolute Rating for a high school:

92% Longitudinal Exit Exam (HSAP):
 $(3 \times 0.3) = 0.9$ points

64% First Attempt HSAP Passage Rate:
 $(5 \times 0.2) = 1.0$ points

25% seniors qualifying for LIFE Scholarships:
 $(3 \times 0.2) = 0.6$ points

70% graduation rate
 $(3 \times 0.3) = 0.9$ points

Sum = 3.4 Index
Absolute Rating: Good

Note: This school’s index of 3.4 is a Good Absolute Rating through 2007. In 2008, a 3.4 index becomes Average.

Since this school’s index of 3.4 is a Good Absolute Rating, the rating would be lowered to Average if the school failed to meet AYP for the category, “all students.”

If the school’s rating was Excellent or Good and it met AYP for the category, “all students”, its rating will remain the same. If the school’s Absolute Rating is Excellent or Good but the school did not meet AYP for

the category “all students,” the Absolute Rating would be lowered by one level – from Excellent to Good or from Good to Average.

How are Improvement Ratings calculated for high schools?

- The improvement ratings are calculated using a mathematical formula that results in an index.
- The index is calculated by subtracting the school’s Absolute Rating index for the prior year from the school’s current year’s Absolute Rating index.
- The resulting index determines the Improvement Rating in accordance with the following values:

Rating	Improvement Index
Excellent	0.4 or greater
Good	0.3
Average	0.1 – 0.2
Below Average	0.0
Unsatisfactory	-0.1 or less

Here is a sample calculation of an Improvement Rating for a high school:

Absolute Rating Index for School Year for which report card is based:	2.44
Absolute Rating Index for the Prior School Year:	- 2.22
Difference	0.22
Rounds to:	0.2

Improvement Rating: Average

Adjustments to the Improvement Rating:

- A school's Improvement Rating is adjusted upwards one rating level, for example from Average to Good or from Good to Excellent, if it has experienced exceptional achievement gains among students belonging to demographic groups which have historically underachieved in South Carolina schools (HUGS). This adjustment to the Improvement Rating is intended to recognize and reward schools which are effectively reducing the achievement gap.
- HUGS are specific groups of students who historically have not achieved as well as the majority student group. HUGS include African-American students, Hispanic students, Native American students, students participating in the free or reduced price federal lunch program and students with non-speech disabilities.
- The gain for the identified groups must exceed the state two-year average improvement index by at least one standard deviation. If a school accomplishes this achievement, a notice is printed on the front page of its report card immediately below the Improvement Rating.

Improvement Ratings for schools sustaining high achievement are established as follows:

Schools maintaining an Excellent Absolute Rating for the current and the immediately preceding year receive a Good Improvement Rating, and if the school's Improvement Index for all students is a positive number (e.g., greater than zero), the school's Improvement Rating will be elevated to Excellent. Schools achieving an Absolute Index of 4.8 or higher for two consecutive years will be awarded an Excellent Improvement Rating.

A Note About AYP

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) – As required by the United States Department of Education through passage of the No Child Left Behind legislation, a notice about the school's status of adequate yearly progress is provided. AYP specifies statewide targets for all students in each student subgroup: racial/ethnic, economic, disability, limited English proficiency, and migrant status.

For specific questions about AYP, please contact the State Department of Education at www.myschools.com